

Owning the land and how it helps develop housing - Knoydart Foundation

RHS conference February 2016

The Knoydart Foundation took ownership of the remains of the Knoydart estate in 1999. Part of the purchase included 7 residential properties, all in poor condition. In 2001 2 of the properties were sold, leaving 5 properties, 1 being vacant due to condition. By 2015, the Foundation was the owner of 11 properties leased out at affordable rents.

However, owning the land has allowed for other opportunities besides directly creating our own rented accommodation:

- We have sold 3 plots to local residents (without conditions)
- We have sold 3 plots on a shared equity basis
- We hope to sell a plot on the open market, the proceeds to be invested in more affordable housing
- We have worked with another local charity to allow them to lease land on which to build a property for their workers
- We agreed a deal with a local family to allow them to build a property on our land. There was no charge for use of the land and as part of the deal they used the property for 10 years and then ownership was transferred to us
- Our location means we are not connected to any mains services which means the community owns and manages some local services - electricity, water, sewage, broadband. This means we can manage costs to the benefit of new affordable homes (is going off grid an option for new properties where mains connections are available but are expensive?)
- Owning property and services has meant we needed a reliable way of ensuring they are maintained - this led to us setting up a maintenance company as an independent CIC
- There are still more opportunities for us to consider in the future - caravans for short term workers, more shared equity, woodland crofts????